

THE FEDERAL SPOTLIGHT

Defeat of Brewster Dims Prospects Of Hatch Act Revision by Congress

By JOSEPH YOUNG
Star Staff Writer

Prospects have dimmed for any action in the new Congress on a special bipartisan commission's proposals for revisions of the Hatch Act governing political activities of federal employees.

The main reason that supporters of the reforms are pessimistic about any action being taken is the defeat for re-election of the proposal's most ardent advocates in Congress, Sen. Daniel Brewster, D-Md.

The defeat of Vice President Hubert Humphrey also was a blow to the proposals' chances, since he had indicated his support if elected president.

Consequently, there appears no one in Congress to carry the ball for the recommendations and it is uncertain what the Nixon administration's attitude will be.

The commission, composed of members of Congress and top public citizens, has proposed greater freedom of political participation by federal employees who desire to participate, particularly in local and state elections. It also proposed giving the Civil Service Commission greater authority in cracking down on government political executives who coerce civil service employees into making campaign contributions and engaging in

political activities against their will.

CIA PROTESTS — Central Intelligence Agency employees are protesting the agency's policy of requiring all employees to retire at age 60 if they have 20 or more years of service.

Although Congress several years ago gave the agency such authority in cases where it felt this was necessary, the employees say that it was not the intent of Congress that all employees be treated this way.

Many of the employees say they are still in the prime of their careers and it is unfair to force them to retire, particularly when they have heavy financial obligations resulting from having children in college, etc.

EARLIER RETIREMENT — Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission is studying the possibility of asking Congress to require the mandatory retirement of government employees at age 65 if they have 15 or more years of service. At present the mandatory retirement age is 70 with 15 years of service.

NO EXTRA HOLIDAY TIME — The Bureau of National Affairs has made a survey that shows 80 percent of American firms are giving their employees

all day off or some time off on the Tuesday preceding Christmas this year. And 43 percent of all companies will give employees some time off on the Tuesday preceding New Year's Day.

However, government employees will have to work all day Tuesday preceding the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Most agencies are adopting a liberal policy whereby employees who can be spared can use their annual leave before and after the holidays for vacation purposes.

Incidentally, federal employees who carried 30 or more days of annual leave into 1968 must use all of the annual leave they earned this year by midnight Jan. 11, 1969, or else lose the unused portion. Those who had less than 30 days annual leave at the start of the year can accumulate only up to 30 days and must use the rest of the leave earned during the year by midnight Jan. 11, 1969, or lose the unused portion.

For postal workers the end of the leave year is midnight Jan. 10, 1969.

There is no problem concerning unused sick leave. Sick leave may be accumulated from year to year without any restrictions.

PARTY — The Society for Personnel Administration will hold its holiday party from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the National Press Club.

POLITICAL PATRONAGE — Rep. John Byrnes, R-Wis., says he will sponsor legislation early in the new Congress to remove all appointments of postmasters and rural carriers from partisan politics.

Byrnes said he is hopeful the Nixon administration will support his move to place these jobs under strict civil service competitive procedures.

APPEALS RESULTS — The Civil Service Commission reports that its board of appeals and review decides in favor of employees in 16 percent of the cases it handles. Employees are successful in 30 percent of the appeals they present to the CSC regional offices. And 60 percent take their cases to the board of appeals after an unfavorable decision at the region.

"The odds are 12 to 1 that the decision given him (the employee) by the commission first-level office will be placed in effect," the CSC report said.